

Mel Brimfield's diverse interdisciplinary and collaborative practice is rooted in scripted performance, incorporating live work, moving image, staged audio, installation and drawing. Operating at the intersection of theatre, live art and film, Brimfield's work aims to combine audiences for the arts and erode outmoded distinctions between creative fields.

*From This World, to That Which Is to Come* takes its title from John Bunyan's 1678 parable 'The Pilgrim's Progress', which describes a fictional pilgrimage from 'The City of Destruction' to 'The Celestial City'. Brimfield reimagines this tale as a loose allegory for a collapse of mental health and the fraught journey to recovery.

This exhibition marks the culmination of two years' work, based on a long-term research residency at Bethlem Royal Hospital's National Psychosis Unit and Kings College Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience in 2018/19. Here, Brimfield collected extensive first hand personal testament from patients, carers, nursing staff, and leading neuroscientists and clinicians via interviews and workshops, alongside close observation of therapeutic intervention and experimental research. In addition, conversations with independent activists strongly resisting pathologised definitions of neurodiversity fed into the process. The series of works produced in response begins with an exploration of the frequently alienating effects of mental ill health and its treatment at an individual, familial and societal level, but ends with a timely celebratory paean to the radical potential of collective creative action and kindness. Brimfield has sought to directly unite, mobilise and foreground networks of community groups offering vital support at a time of crisis in the provision of effective mental health services.

Central to the exhibition is *STAND, 2020*, a new sixteen speaker sculptural audio installation in The Tetley's Atrium, co-produced with composer Gwyneth Herbert. It houses a complex choral composition responding to a poignant spoken word recitation by a Bethlem inpatient recorded by Brimfield during her residency. This epic sound sculpture is directly built and performed by over 100 collaborators, including UK Men's Sheds and Men's Sheds Cymru groups nationwide, mental health service users and workers and prison inmates.

The exhibition also features a constellation of audio monologues, fragmented theatrical sets, moving image works and large-scale drawings, often casting visitors as both audience and performer in a series of listening stations as static tableaux. Combining autofiction with adaptation, a cast of literary and popular cultural characters perform skewed narratives drawn from Brimfield's own familial history of psychosis, depression and anxiety to darkly humourous, melancholy effect. Tintin's adventures are compressed to an absurdist paranoid fantasy of conspiracy and pursuit acted out within the confines of Bethlem Hospital. The artist consults Peanuts character Lucy in her psychiatrist's booth for therapy. Bunyan's Giant Despair is cast as Brimfield's father as a monstrous purple Hulk in a trilogy of works enacting a comic book origin story of misery, loss, rage and transformation. Elsewhere, a hapless actor in a vocal isolation booth struggles to record an audiobook of Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' whilst slowly morphing into a giant cockroach, menaced by a malign foley artist. This deeply personal, impactful body of work explores the sometimes toxic legacy of mutually rehearsed family narratives on mental health, and of our vulnerability and isolation in the face of perceptual and cognitive malfunction.

